

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-09

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-10 AGRE-00 AID-05

CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-04 ERDA-07 FEAE-00 FMC-02

TRSE-00 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 NSF-02 OES-06 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-04 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /140 W

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R 292000Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5970

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USMISSION USUN

UNCLAS SUVA 0401

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLOS, EMIN, FJ

SUBJECT: FIJI GOVERNMENT OT BEGIN EXPLORATION OF ITS MARINE
RESOURCES

FIJI'S MINISTRY OF INFORMATION CIRCULATED THE FOLLOWING
NEWS RELEASE ON FUTURE PLANS FOR EXPLORATION OF ITS
MARINE RESOURCES.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO EMBARK ON A PRELIMINARY
SURVEY OF FIJI'S MARINE RESOURCES.

SPEAKING AT A KEEL-LAYING CEREMONY AT THE MARINE
DEPARTMENT SHIPYARD TODAY, THE PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR
LANDS, MINES AND MINERALS, MR. TOLAK VERMA, SAID THE
COMPLETION OF THE NEW SHIP FOR THE MINERAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
WOULD MARK A FIRST TANGIBLE STEP INTO AN ERA OF SCIENTIFIC
EXPLORATION OF FIJI'S MARINE ENVIRONMENT.

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MR. VERMA SAID THE PROPOSED \$180,000 VESSEL WILL BE
FITTED WITH MODERN SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT SO AS TO HELP IT
CARRY OUT A PRELIMINARY TEN-YEAR EXPLORATION PERIOD OF THE
SHALLOW SHELF AREAS AROUND THE ISLANDS OF FIJI.

HE SAID THAT WITH THE AID OF THE VESSEL HIS MINISTRY

HOPES TO MAKE A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL RESOURCES OF THE SHALLOW SHELF AREAS AND HELP COMPILE A GOOD INVENTORY OF FIJI'S RESOURCES IN ORDER TO PLAN FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

HE SAID THAT DURING THIS TEN-YEAR PERIOD IT IS HOPED THAT MORE INFORMATION WOULD BE GATHERED CONCERNING THE PETROLEUM POTENTIAL OF FIJI'S FORESHORES.

AT THE SAME TIME MUCH INFORMATION COULD BE GATHERED ABOUT OTHER MINERALS SUCH AS MANGANESE NODULES AND IN THE PROCESS COLLECT MUCH DATA ON THE GEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF OUR ISLANDS.

MR. VERMA SAID THAT WITH THE GROWING INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS ON THE PROPOSED 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONES, THE PROPOSED EXPLORATION OF THE RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY WILL BE BASED ON SCIENTIFIC REALITY.

HE SAID THE AMBITION OF EXPLOITING OFFSHORE RESOURCES WAS ONE THAT WAS ACHIEVED BY ALMOST ALL THE COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD INCLUDING COUNTRIES IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGION.

MR. VERMA SAID THE DIRECT RESULT OF THIS WAS THE FORMATION OF A COMMITTEE FOR THE COORDINATION OF OFF-SHORE PROSPECTING IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGION.

THIS COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED AS A REGIONAL BODY TO GIVE GREATER IMPETUS TO EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION OF OFF-SHORE RESOURCES IN THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC.
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"THE UNITED NATIONS HAS RECOGNISED THIS AS AN AREA WHERE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES NEED PRACTICAL HELP.

HE SAID A PROGRAMME FOR FUNDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES IS ONE OF THE AIMS OF THE REVOLVING FUND FOR MINERAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, BEING ESTABLISHED BY THE UNITED NATIONS.

"THERE IS MUCH SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT MINERALS ARE PRESENT, PROBABLY IN VAST QUANTITIES ON AND UNDER THE SEA BED."

HE SAID THAT WHEN THE VESSEL IS COMPLETED IT IS HOPED THAT SHE WILL CONTRIBUTE A LOT TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARINE RESOURCE EXPLORATION IN TERRITORIAL WATERS OF THE COUNTRY."
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